All local law enforcement agencies in the state of North Carolina were included in the sampling universe with the exception of universities, company and special police departments and two sheriffs' offices. These were excluded because their respective patrol jurisdictions did not include any Internet cafés or gambling locations or in the case of the sheriffs' offices they did not provide routine patrol coverage and response services as these were provided by city or county police agencies. State agencies, such as the Highway Patrol, were not included as the regulation or investigation of Internet cafés does not fall within their normal mission or statutory enforcement mandate. The state's Alcohol Law Enforcement Division, which does investigate illegal gambling and prohibited video poker machines, was not included as the focus of this study was on the local community and not an entire region or the state as a whole.

Two separate sampling frames were compiled with the sheriffs' list containing 98 agencies and the local police list containing 347 distinct agencies which were eligible for inclusion in the sample and for possible survey distribution and completion. Each list was divided into quartiles based upon the median population or number of residents within the agency's patrol jurisdiction for the sheriffs' offices and local police departments respectively. The median population coverage for the state's sheriffs' offices was 32,411 residents. This includes only those individuals residing in the county, i.e. outside of the city limits. Thus the smallest quartile ranged from 4,290 citizens to 17,907. The second quartile included those offices having jurisdiction over a population of 18,647 to the sample median of 32,411. The third group ranged from the median to 55,653 citizens with the fourth quartile including those sheriffs' offices which provide law enforcement patrol services to larger counties with populations between 59,251 and the group high population of 181, 573.

The smallest quartile for the local police list included agencies providing patrol coverage for cities ranging from the group low of 88 to 1,168 citizens. The second quartile included agencies providing coverage for cities and towns with populations between 1,169 to the median of 2,975. The third quartile included police departments from populations of 2,801 to 8,261. The fourth quartile included agencies which provide patrol coverage for cities with populations between 8,262 and the group high of 728,755.

Utilizing a standard sample size calculator or estimator with a 5 percent margin of error and confidence intervals set at 95 percent, it was determined that 78 sheriffs' offices, or roughly 20 from each population coverage quartile or strata, and 183 local police departments or approximately 46 from each quartile, would be included in the study sample to receive a copy of the questionnaire in the mail. Disproportionate stratified sampling was preferred as the researchers' preliminary investigation and discussions suggested that Internet cafés would be primarily located in mid to large size geographic areas. Consequently, disproportionate stratified sampling would insure the inclusion of a greater number of agencies providing coverage for these cities and towns versus proportionate sampling based on population which would have, given the state's rural nature, resulted in the inclusion of far more smaller jurisdictions which probably do not have as many Internet cafés. Agencies were randomly selected from each quartile until the appropriate and required number was obtained for each of the two law enforcement group samples.